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MESSIAH,

A

SACRED POEM.

CAMBRIDGE,

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BRITISH MUSEUM

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MESSIAH,

A

SACRED POEM.

TO thee, my God, my grateful voice I'll raiſe,
To bleſs thy goodneſs, and proclaim thy praiſe:
I'll join in rapt'rous notes of warmeſt love,
The Hallelujahs of the Saints above:
For I have cauſe.—Ye bleſſed Spirits, ſay;
Who deign'd to beam on Man, ſalvation's ray?
On Man accurs'd, a rebel to his God,
Unmov'd by mercy's ſmiles; unaw'd by terror's rod:
Say, for ye know how heaven's wide concave rung,
When all your hoſts the Saviour's praiſes ſung;
As from his lips thoſe bleſſed accents flow'd,
"On me, my Father, lay man's wretched load,
"Let me thy utmoſt indignation prove,
"So man becomes the object of thy love."
And thou, O deign t' inſpire the ſacred lay,
And teach a Saviour's mercy to diſplay,
Bleſt Spirit, whoſe divine infuſions ſeal'd
The Truth eternal in his Word reveal'd:

Inſpire the Muſe with ſacred zeal to trace
The plan myſterious of redeeming grace;
To point the ſteps the bleſſed JESUS trod,
And teach ungrateful Man to bleſs the ways of GOD.

IN NAZARETH, a town of mean report,
Where pomp and ſplendor never kept their court,
There liv'd an humble Maid; whoſe pious ways
Few car'd to imitate, though all would praiſe:
Betroth'd of late (as Providence decreed)
To Joſeph, ſprung from royal David's ſeed:
While yet apart, each led a blameleſs life,
(The plighted husband and the virgin wife,)
It chanc'd, as muſing in her houſe ſhe lay,
Uncommon ſplendor gilt the face of day:
She lifts her eyes, where lo! an angel ſtood,
(That pleaſing angel, Gabriel the good,)
Who thus began with heav'nly ſounds to chear,
And ſpeak compoſure to her virgin fear:
" All hail, bleſt maid! for GOD himſelf is thine,
" And thou, above thy ſex, ordain'd to ſhine:
" O highly favor'd! confidently raiſe
" Thy ſoul to rapture, and thy voice to praiſe:
" For know, from thee the Son of GOD ſhall ſpring,
" The PRINCE of PEACE, and Judah's promis'd King;
" Deſtin'd the throne of David to aſcend,
" And whoſe extenſive empire knows no end."

When

When Mary, long with admiration dumb,
" How can this bleſſing to a virgin come?"
To whom the angel — " By no common way
" Shall GOD this mercy to the world diſplay:
" The Holy Ghoſt ſhall ſhed creating power,
" And o'er thy womb prolific influence ſhower:
" His Name ordain'd before the world began;
" JESUS the SON of GOD; JESUS the FRIEND of MAN.
" Strange as it ſeems, Elizabeth muſt ſhare
" The pleaſing ſtruggles of a promis'd Heir;
" Nay, feels the preludes of that happy day,
" Since twice three moons have trac'd their deſtin'd way.
" Nor wonder; ſince from weakneſs, GOD can raiſe,
" Proofs of unbounded pow'r, ſubjects of endleſs praiſe."
No longer Mary could her joy contain;
It burſt with rapture in this pious ſtrain:
" Behold the humble handmaid of the LORD;
" Be it to me according to his word!"
She ſaid; and Gabriel cleft the yielding air,
And left the maid to ſolitude and prayer.

That GOD is great, creation's works diſcloſe;
That GOD is true, the happy Virgin knows:
The ſtrange conception, with amazement feels,
And, in due time, with pious awe reveals.
Yet much ſhe muſes on the wond'rous plan
Of GOD incarnate, for the ſake of man:

'Till fleeting months remind her to prepare,
To give to light this heav'n-deſcended Heir.
While Providence (whoſe wond'rous ways, in vain
Men ſeek by human wiſdom to explain,)
Decrees on more extenſive ſcenes to prove,
This act of boundleſs, unexampl'd love.
To David's city muſt this pair proceed,
(For ſo the Roman edict had decreed;
Which bid, that to their city each repair
To prove their lineage, and their houſe declare,
And bear a tax impos'd.) From David's race
The happy Joſeph could his lineage trace.
Hence Bethlehem of Judah dares to claim,
And, from contending countries, challenge fame.
But, when obedient to the hard command,
They reach, at length, the diſtant happy land,
No kind repoſe attends the weary pair,
Neglect their lot, and miſery their ſhare.
For greater numbers ſeek repoſe to gain,
Than crouded Bethlehem can now contain.
Foil'd with the journey, and with pain o'ercome,
The Virgin ſeeks the noiſom ſtable's gloom;
Reclin'd ſhe reſts, and, with amazement, knows
Amid ſurrounding herds a mother's throws:
But ſoon perceives the ſacred Son is giv'n;
And, in that ſtrange retirement, bleſſes Heav'n.

Then

Then ſeeks with care the bleſſed Babe to lay:
But where the cradle, or the bed, but hay?
Great God! ſhall pride the regal ſtate invade,
When thou wert in the humble manger laid?
Great God! ſhall poverty diſtruſt thy care,
When ſuch diſtreſs encompaſs'd Heaven's Heir?
Thus laid, the tender mother's tears o'erflow'd;
She kiſs'd the Infant, and ador'd the God.

The myſtic birth ſuch poverty conceals,
The watchful care of Providence reveals;
Reveals to ſhepherds as their flocks they keep,
And guard from hungry wolves their tender ſheep:
A ſudden light o'erſpread them as they lay,
And lent to night the blaze of glory's day:
The trembling ſhepherds proſtrate fear to riſe,
Nor dare to ſuch effulgence lift their eyes;
'Till murmurs gentle as the vernal breeze,
Which ſweetly whiſpers to the panting trees,
Beſpoke ſome kind celeſtial meſſage near;
And ſoon theſe dulcet accents charm'd their ear:
" Fear not, ye innocent contented poor;
" My news is joyful, and my tidings ſure:
" To you this day a bleſſed Child is giv'n,
" And you this day are made the ſons of Heav'n.
" Ariſe, and ſwift to Bethlehem repair;
" Behold the Infant's wants, the Mother's care:

" Within the ſcanty manger ſee him laid,
" While peace and poverty ſurround his bed:
" Yet potent princes muſt his pow'r proclaim,
" And haughty empires learn to bleſs his name."
The Angel ſaid, while num'rous hoſts appear,
And with their Hallelujahs fill the air:
" To GOD on high be adoration paid;
" Let peace on earth her fruitful bleſſings ſhed:
" Let hate and malice from the world remove;
" And man, by GOD's example, learn to LOVE."
Thus ſung the bleſſed choir, and ſinging ſoar'd,
The proſtrate ſhepherds trembl'd, and ador'd.
Then riſing, mindful of the heav'nly voice,
To Bethlehem repair. ——
There ſaw the Infant in the manger laid,
And with devotion, adoration paid;
Return'd with ſpeed, and ſpread abroad with joy,
The welcome tidings of the ſacred Boy;
Ador'd GOD's goodneſs, whom compaſſion mov'd,
At ſuch expence to ſave the ſouls he lov'd.
They told, and prais'd, 'till all Judea heard,
And bleſs'd the coming of th' incarnate Word.
WHEN eight days old, (ſo Moſes' rites ordain,)
CHRIST bore the myſtic circumciſion's pain;
And took the name of JESUS as decreed,
Before conception's hour. ——

But not alone does Judah's land confine
Theſe joyful tidings of a birth divine;
Where orient ſuns emit their lucid ray,
And gild the mountain tops with early day;
A new-form'd ſtar its glorious influence ſheds,
And heav'nly brightneſs o'er Arabia ſpreads.
The Magi, skill'd each planet to declare,
That proudly glitters in the liquid air;
Amaz'd, this new inhabitant ſurvey,
That ſhines reſplendent in the face of day.
But God, who form'd the firmament on high,
And nam'd each ſpangling tenant of the sky;
Reveals, what eaſtern wiſdom had in vain
With painful muſings labour'd to explain:
Joyful they learn what bleſſings are decreed,
Prepar'd to follow as the ſtar ſhall lead:
To pay their homage in the calm retreat,
And lay their tribute at a Saviour's feet.
Led by the lucid harbinger they rove,
Stay as it ſtays, and as it wanders, move.
It led, where Salem's lofty city lay;
It ſtop'd, and with it ſtop'd the Sages' weary way:
When rumor ſwift to Herod's ear conveys,
News that diſturbs, and tidings that amaze;
For rumor tells, that eaſtern ſages bring
Unqueſtion'd proofs of Judah's new-born King:

The thought ſtrikes terror through the tyrant's ſoul,
Unapt to bear reſtraint, or know controul:
'Till ſubtle arts ſupply their ſoothing aid,
And future ills to preſent peace perſuade.
He ſmooths his ruffled brow, and ſighing feigns
Much approbation of their pious pains;
Bids to proceed to Bethlehem, and bring
More certain tidings of this new-born King;
That he with them may piouſly adore
This Child of wonder, and this Prince of pow'r.
Diſmiſs'd, the Sages ſeek the bleſt abode,
Where anxious Mary tends the Infant God.
The faithful ſtar their deſtin'd journey leads,
And o'er the ſpot diſtinguiſh'd luſtre ſpreads:
Awful they enter, proſtrate they adore,
And full profuſions of their duty pour;
Sabean gums (as prophets had foretold,)
Sweet-ſcented incenſe, and reſplendent gold.
Th' aſtoniſh'd pair, in ſilence, bleſs the ways
Which God ordains to ſpread the Infant's praiſe:
The Sages bow, ſubmiſſive at his feet,
And, with reluctance, quit the bleſt retreat:
Reſolv'd, when Phœbus glads the riſing day,
To Herod's ears this wonder to convey.
When, in a dream, the will of God ordains,
They ſeek no more to viſit Salem's plains:

For Herod means to pour deſtruction's flood,
And deluge Judah with a ſea of blood.
Admoniſh'd thus, they chearfully obey,
And to their native country bend their way:
While Mary haſtes to Salem to repair,
To pay redemption's tribute for her Heir.
There, in the ſacred temple, offers doves,
Emblems of chaſte and unpolluted loves:
Old Simeon's breaſt the bleſſed JESUS fires,
He ſpeaks prophetic as the Lord inſpires;
The pious Anna joins her voice of praiſe,
While gath'ring crouds in admiration gaze.
WHO ſees the Lybian lion roar for food,
By hunger pinch'd, and ravenous for blood;
Beholds the rage of madneſs which poſſeſs'd
And fir'd the diſappointed Herod's breaſt.
A riſing Prince, whoſe heav'n-deſcended ſway,
Creation's utmoſt limits muſt obey:
Whoſe fame and pow'r extenſively muſt ſpread,
Hangs like a baleful meteor o'er his head.
He aims to ward the blow——
The bleſſed Infant's age till now conceal'd,
The unſuſpecting Magi had reveal'd;
And letter'd Sages of the Hebrew race
From ſacred records told the deſtin'd place.
As when a cunning fowler ſeeks to ſnare
The free-born roving tenants of the air;

He ſlily aims deſtructive nets to lay
Where thoughtleſs ſongſters wing their wanton way:
So plan'd the bloody king——
He bids the ſudden ſword each male deſtroy
That ſports coeval with the bleſſed Boy;
The blooming innocents of Bethl'hem's coaſt,
Love's mutual pledge, and happy Judah's boaſt:
The horrid deed diſtracted mothers view'd,
And claſp'd their tender infants dipp'd in blood:
Their dying ſhrieks affright th' aſtoniſh'd air,
And all was murder, horror, and deſpair.
But know, proud Herod, impotently great,
God's pow'r is boundleſs, and his will is fate;
Who ſpread o'er deeds (that bluſh in open light)
The ſable curtain of the ſilent night:
Sin not ſecurely thus—God's eye pervades
Man's cloſeſt holds, retirement's thickeſt ſhades.
Nay, could we ſoar to reach the realms above,
Or could the mountains' firm foundations move,
Still God is there—for all creation lies,
Like a vaſt volume, open to his eyes.
Thy horrid purpoſe was to Mary known,
And man's Redeemer is to Egypt flown;
Far from the reach of malice ſtain'd with blood,
Egypt protects and cheriſhes the God:
For ſo Almighty Wiſdom had decreed,
No pow'r of thine ſhould make the Infant bleed:

For this, thy purpoſe in a dream declar'd,
And mark'd the ſcheme thy helliſh breaſt prepar'd.
To Egypt thus remov'd, the bleſſed pair
Attend on JESUS with affection's care;
And happy in the eaſy task of love,
They neither wiſh to ſtay, or want to move.
It chanc'd, as night her awful gloom had ſpread,
And placid peace ſtood guardian at their bed;
Their active thoughts a watchful GOD informs,
That calms ſucceeded to Judea's ſtorms:
That crafty Herod liv'd not to deſtroy,
Or aim deſtruction at their bleſſed Boy;
Commands to leave Egyptian lands, and bring
To Judah's borders Judah's deſtin'd King:
With gratitude they yield——
Obedient ſtretch to Nazareth their way,
And in its peaceful borders fix their ſtay.
THE hand of GOD, which forms with niceſt art,
Each tender fibre, and each wond'rous part;
Ordain'd all nature ſhould his Son approve,
Whoſe looks were ſweetneſs, and whoſe ſmiles were love.
In comely ſtature grew the heav'nly Boy,
The parents ſaw, and own'd the heart-felt joy;
His ſenſe and wiſdom kept an equal pace,
And as he grew in ſtature, ſo in grace.
'Till now twelve ſuns had warm'd the fertile earth,
Since Judah firſt proclaim'd his wond'rous birth;

When duty prompts to Salem to repair,
And pay the tribute of accuſtom'd pray'r;
In dread remembrance of that ſolemn hour,
When Egypt's firſt-born felt avenging pow'r:
Crouds flock'd to celebrate thoſe ſacred days,
And all in SOLYMA was joy and praiſe.
This task perform'd, they meaſure back their way,
Nor ſtop their ſpeed, but with the ſetting day:
But how ſhall weak deſcription paint their fear,
When looking round they ſaw no JESUS near?
Robb'd of the comfort of their bleſſed Child,
Eager through hope, and, with impatience, wild;
They haſten back to Salem's hallow'd ground,
If there, perchance, the Saviour may be found.
Eager they ask, and anxiouſly inquire,
Where ſtrays the object of their ſouls' deſire?
What dwelling hides, or happy walls contain
The ſource of all their joy, but now of all their pain?
O give him to his tender parents' breaſt,
And be yourſelves, in bleſſing others, bleſt!
Now thrice the ſun had ſhot his orient ray,
And thrice night's gloom had veil'd the face of day;
When to the temple's ſacred courts they tend,
O'erwhelm'd in grief before their GOD to bend.
Here, with amaze, with great, but tongue-ty'd joy,
They find (what moſt they wiſh'd) their long-loſt Boy;

But

But find him plac'd, where ancient Rabbis hung,
Attentive to the dictates of his tongue:
Truth, as he ſpake, with radiant brightneſs glow'd,
And wiſdom, more than human, mark'd the GOD.
At length the parents thus:—
Son, Why forſake and leave us thus to bear
Diſtracting fears, and heart-conſuming care?
"What? Know ye not (the gentle JESUS ſaid)
"My Father's buſineſs muſt not be delay'd?"
Then roſe, and follow'd, as his parents led,
The ſolitary paths of NAZARETH to tread;
Where, ſever'd long from life's polluted ways,
His hours flew wing'd by duty and by praiſe:
'Till time's ſtill courſe brought on the deſtin'd day,
His heav'nly power in Judah to diſplay.
He bids farewel, a long farewel to joy,
To bliſsful pleaſure that can never cloy;
To mingle with a vicious, headſtrong croud;
To check the torrent of corruption's flood;
The winning charms of piety to paint;
To live, at once, the Preacher and the Saint.
'TWAS when on JORDAN's banks the BAPTIST ſtood,
To dip repentant converts in the flood;
(A ſacred rite, which Providence ordains,
To mark our cleanſing from pollution's ſtains;)
The bleſſed JESUS came——

The conſcious BAPTIST modeſtly demands
To ſhare ſuch honor from his SAVIOUR's hands;
But (taught from ſcripture) what was fit and good,
The BAPTIST dips him in the myſtic flood.
When ſtrait the HOLY GHOST deſcends to ſpread
A flood of glory on his ſacred head;
Dove-like it ſat, and blaz'd celeſtial day,
'Till thus a voice, like thunder, burſt its way:
"This is my SON; the object of my love;
"Whoſe every thought and action I approve."
Swift through the croud the heavenly murmur run,
This is GOD's only, and beloved SON.

FAME caught the ſound, and quickly ſpread abroad
The public preſence of this SON of GOD.
But trials, ſharp as human ſtrength could bear,
By GOD's decree, became the SAVIOUR's ſhare.
Where dreary waſtes a gloom of horror pour'd;
Where wolves prowl'd fierce, and ſavage lions roar'd:
No verdant turf the longing eye to chear,
No path of man to ſpeak compaſſion near:
No roof, to guard from Sol's meridian ray,
From night inclement, or tempeſtuous day:
In ſuch a ſcene, unpitied and alone
Behold the SAVIOUR plac'd, GOD's only SON.
Proſtrate he falls, and to his Father prays,
His will to ſtrengthen, and his hopes to raiſe.

To grant him power with firmneſs to ſuſtain
A life of ſorrow, and a death of pain.
To bear ingratitude for mercies ſhown,
And ſuffer much for actions, not his own.
To meet with patience, calumny and wrong,
To ſanctify his lips, and guard his tongue.
That all his actions might his FATHER's name
And glory, to the univerſe proclaim.
And (to compleat redemption's wond'rous plan)
His precious blood might ſave offending man;
Thus ſending pray'r, or pouring lofty praiſe,
He paſs'd the awful ſpace of forty days,
When human nature fail'd.——
As when a cunning angler, from the ſide
Of ſome clear ſtream beholds fair fiſhes glide;
Artful he meditates to catch his prey,
By ſpreading much temptation in their way:
Covers the hook with all that may ſurpriſe,
Inflame their wiſhes, and deceive their eyes.
So the arch-tempter, foul, apoſtate, fiend,
Each hell-born paſſion in his breaſt conven'd,
How beſt the purity of CHRIST to taint,
And, with ſeductive malice, blaſt the Saint.
At length, approaching with malicious ſneer,
" How comes the LORD of all creation here?
" Is this a palace for the King of Heav'n,
" To whom, men ſay, all pow'r on earth is giv'n?

" Bid

" Bid then, from ſapleſs ſtones, nutrition riſe,
" Seek for thy hunger in the flints, ſupplies:
" For ſuch thy pow'r (as ſcripture does record)
" And who but pays attention to their word?
" The ſcriptures tell (ſo JESUS meekly ſaid)
" That man may live by other means than bread:
" The heav'nly precepts of the GOD above,
" Shall every wiſh ſupply, and every want remove."
THE TEMPTER foil'd, another ſcene prepares,
And JESUS to the temple's ſummit bears;
" Hence SON of GOD (if ſuch indeed your name)
" Spring headlong, and ſecure eternal fame;
" Angels ſhall bear thee (if of thee 'tis meant)
" Angels ſhall bear thee in thy quick deſcent:
" Leaſt pain or miſchief ſhould thy fall attend,
" Thy bones to fracture, or thy fleſh to rend."
JESUS replies, " What ſays the written word?
" Thou muſt not vainly ſeek to tempt the LORD."
Vanquiſh'd again, and yet averſe to yield
The wreath of conqueſt in temptation's field;
The DEVIL plants him where the mountains riſe,
And, with their lofty ſummits, dare the skies.
From thence preſents creation's ample rounds,
Its ſplendid cities, and its ſmiling bounds:
" Whatever feeds ambition's tow'ring flame,
" Can quench the luſt of pow'r or thirſt of fame;

Earth's

" Earth's richeſt treaſures, Gems from Indus' ſhore,
" All theſe are mine, the ſubjects of my power.
" All theſe be freely thine, the Tempter ſaid,
" Only to ME be adoration paid."
To thee, vile fiend — apoſtate ſpirit — go;
To thee, nor hands ſhall ſpread, nor knee ſhall bow:
To him alone each pious ſoul muſt bend,
Whoſe Being, knows nor origin, nor end.
As when a ſerpent vainly ſeeks to hide
In tufted wood or brake its ſcaly pride;
If chance diſcovers on the open plain
The loathſome reptile to the paſſing ſwain,
With inborn hate he aims the miſsile dart,
And points the wiſh'd deſtruction to its heart;
Th' affrighted beaſt unfolds its glitt'ring ſpires,
Swells as it moves, and with a hiſs retires:
So fled the Devil by our Lord reprov'd;
So, ſullen to the realms of darkneſs mov'd:
When ſtrait, angelic meſſengers prepare
To wing their flight through tracts of ambient air;
Then ſhoot through azure plains, and joyful bring
Ambroſial ſuſtenance to Glory's King.
THE Saviour, thus repleniſh'd from above
With full profuſions of eternal love,
Feels in his heav'nly breaſt freſh ardor glow,
To reſcue helpleſs man from endleſs woe;

To bring with him, in rapture's blifs to reign;
In blifs, uncheck'd by fear, unhurt by pain;
In blifs, that knows, nor fulnefs, nor decay;
Eternal funfhine of eternal day.

But where fhall this his bleffed task begin?
Where all was fpecious guile, or open fin;
Where much corruption had o'errun the ftate,
The good polluted, and o'ercome the great?
The Law, by Moses to their fathers giv'n,
(A facred tranfcript from the God of Heav'n)
By Scribes perverted to a felfifh end,
Defil'd the morals it was meant to mend;
Where devious each from duty dar'd to ftray,
And ftamp a path through pleafure's flow'ry way;
The meek and helplefs to oppref's with power,
And aggravate affliction's galling hour:
To fuch a wretched world this Preacher came,
Nor fought, but in benevolence, for fame;
With kindnefs ftrove each ftubborn heart to move,
To fpread o'er penitents the wings of love;
With truth's pervading warmth each breaft to thaw,
And with his Gofpel abrogate the Law.

There were, whom poverty compell'd to gain
A fmall fupport at much expence of pain;
Who knew by ftormy night or fultry day
To fpread deftruction o'er the finny prey:

Untutor'd poor in learning's ſubtle lore;
Plain ſenſe their lot, and peace of mind their ſtore:
Such are the men to whom the Saviour lends
Inſtruction's aid, and chuſes for his friends:
Ordains them partners in his work of love,
And pre-elects them to the joys above.
BUT leſt his ſerious purpoſe ſhould offend;
And check from ſeeking aid he wiſh'd to lend;
See him to CANA's bridal rites repair,
And cheerful, in their feſtive pleaſures ſhare;
Nay, kindly bid the limpid ſtreams combine
To pour profuſion of enliv'ning wine:
For genuine piety in ſmiles diſplays,
How pleaſant and how peaceful are her ways,
How far remov'd from gloom!———
The noiſe of this firſt miracle, conveyed
Far as the ſounding voice of fame could ſpread,
Prepar'd attentive Judah to receive
What ſelf-conceit forbid them to believe.
CHRIST's mean deſcent and education known,
Forbid to think him born for DAVID's throne.
The force of words with heav'nly truth replete
The name of NAZ'RETH can alone defeat.
External pomp in JESUS they demand,
And regal power to rule JUDEA's land.
To conquer ſin, and heav'nly thrones prepare,
Invites no converts, and deſerves no care.

But JESUS ſtill was kind ——

ARE there who never knew the joys of light,
Condemn'd to grope in dark unfriendly night?
He bids to wake, and inſtantly ſurvey
The ſtreaming glories of meridian day.
Are there, whoſe limbs in vain attempt to bear,
Or on their tott'ring baſe the body rear?
If ſuch, with modeſt faith requeſt to ſtand,
They ſpring uplifted by his healing hand.
The tongue, unapt to form the mind's requeſt,
By native impotence of ſpeech oppreſt,
His kind command with readineſs obeys,
And utters ſounds of wonder, notes of praiſe.
Nor delug'd dropſy, nor the fever's rage,
Unfeeling palſy or diſtemper'd age,
Nor any ills which wretched nature knows,
Th' almighty FIAT of his will oppoſe;
Crowds flock, by ſin and miſery diſtreſt,
Ask help in faith, receive it, and are bleſt.
Nay, Devils tremble at his powerful word,
And own him all creation's ſovereign LORD:
Call'd forth, in legions tear their boiſt'rous way,
And leave mankind to reaſon's peaceful ſway.
But had I mouths as ſands upon the ſhore,
Or had I tongues than ſtars in number more,
Still ſhould I fail to trace the SAVIOUR's plan,
Whoſe every breath was ſpent in bleſſing man:

But chiefly to redeem the captive ſoul
From error's power, and pleaſure's ſweet controul:
To wipe the miſts of prejudice away,
And baniſh darkneſs from RELIGION's day.
To warm affection and attention raiſe,
CHRIST choſe the parable's inſtructive phraſe;
And as he ſaw miſtaken notions move,
And ſever man from GOD's forgiving love,
Thus kindly told his bleſſed Father's mind,
And by this parable his love defin'd:
THERE flouriſh'd once a man for worth renown'd,
Whoſe actions juſtice rul'd, and mercy crown'd;
Two ſons mature of years adorn'd his age,
And with affection did his cares aſſwage.
At length, the younger was diſpos'd to rove,
And quit the ſunſhine of a father's love:
Big with the thought, he asks his ſire to ſpare
A preſent portion, and a brother's ſhare.
Tears, as he ſpoke, o'erwhelm'd the parent's eyes,
While love each tender ſoothing art ſupplies,
To win him in thoſe ſafer walls to ſtay,
And ſhun the ſnares that line temptation's way:
But youth is deaf, and father's tears are vain;
Paſſions are headſtrong, nor obey the rein.
At length the parent yields ———
Now ſee the youth embark on ſeas of joy;
No riots ſurfeit, and no follies cloy.

Beguil'd by novelty's ſeductive charms
He ſinks ſupine in pleaſure's ſilken arms;
Swift-pinion'd hours in diſſipation move,
And dip their wings in luxury and love.
But ſoon, too ſoon, the golden dream is o'er,
And mirth and joy and tranſport are no more.
His portion waſted, and his credit gone,
He ſtarves neglected; for he ſtarves alone:
Deſerted by thoſe friends his bounty fed,
He knows the want of pity, as of bread.
Reflection ſeiz'd the thought-compelling hour,
To lend her healing aid, her bleſſed power:
Then firſt he ſaw with horror and amaze,
What dangers wait on pleaſure's ſinful ways.
And now he ſeeks in meek and abject mood,
To furniſh to the ſwine their daily food:
Nor thus obtains ſufficient to repair
The wants of nature, and the waſtes of care;
But longs to ſhare the ſordid meal with ſwine,
And pinch'd with hunger, on the husks to dine:
But this refus'd, he caſts a longing eye
To where each want had met a kind ſupply.
" I will ariſe, (the wretched convert ſaid,)
" And at a parent's feet my ſorrows ſpread;
" Confeſs my folly, by myſelf undone,
" Nor worthy of the tender name of Son:

" I'm

" I'm ſinful in the ſight of him and heaven,
" Nor, but in mercy, hope to be forgiven."
He ſaid, and ſtrait aroſe ——
Whom, as approaching, (full of anxious care,
Leſt harſh reſentment ſhould become his ſhare)
The tender father from a diſtance ſpies,
And with exulting rapture fills the skies;
Then runs to meet him, and with tears of joy,
" Welcome my wretched, but my ſtill lov'd boy."
" Father, I've ſinn'd (the proſtrate convert ſaid)
" And of thy juſt diſpleaſure am afraid:
" I'm wicked in the ſight of thee and heaven,
" And (but in mercy) ask to be forgiven.
" No more — the weeping father fondly cries,
" But, once more welcome to my arms, ariſe:
Then bids bring forth the robe of Tyrian dye,
And every ornament of dreſs ſupply:
Prepare the banquet and the flowing bowl,
To kindle rapture and exalt the ſoul:
The voice of melody and muſick join
To celebrate a bleſſing ſo divine:
A ſon reſtor'd to bleſs a parent's ſight,
And tranſport's day ſucceeding ſorrow's night.
That ſon, who never from his father ſtray'd,
But with much duty had his will obey'd;
Complain'd ſuch honours never were his ſhare,
Nor favour ſhewn his moſt aſſiduous care.

" Son

" Son of my love, the gentle father ſaid,
" Reſpect was ever to thy merit paid;
" But 'tis a cauſe for rapture to ſurvey
" And find the ſheep whom error taught to ſtray:
" To find again, whom long as dead we mourn'd,
" Alive, and to his father's arms return'd."
So, when repenting ſinners ſue for grace,
And all their confidence in mercy place;
Th' Almighty Parent of forgiving love
Deigns the returning convert to approve:
Stretches his arms of mercy to receive;
And kindly bids the trembling ſinner live.

If man from God can ſuch compaſſion find;
Man to his fellow-creatures muſt be kind.
To love our neighbour even Jews allow'd
A binding duty and a precept good:
But ſcanty limits did their love confine,
Where neighbour meant their family and line.
It chanc'd, (for ſo our Saviour did declare
To one that ask'd, who claim'd a neighbour's care:)
A certain man, defenceleſs and alone,
Travell'd with ſpeed to reach a diſtant town:
When, from a wood, (with villainous intent
Watching the way which lonely trav'llers went)
The ſpoilers ruſh'd, the wretched man they wound,
They rob, then throw him ſenſeleſs to the ground.

A Prieſt and Levite ſaw him as he lay,
But turn'd aſide, and paſs'd another way;
Not ſo the good SAMARITAN; his breaſt
With pity melts to ſuccour the diſtreſt:
" Wretched unknown! thy gaping wounds demand
" The healing bleſſings of a skilful hand;
" Stretch'd on the rugged earth, thou ſeem'ſt to know,
" Depriv'd of ſenſe, but half thy ſhare of woe."
He ſaid, and ſoothing oil and wine apply'd
To ſtay the purple current's bubbling tide:
Plac'd on his beaſt, and led with tender care,
Gently, as ſuch unhappy wounds could bear;
Beſpeaks compaſſion's hoſpitable aid,
And, on a bed of comfort, ſees him laid:
Requites the landlord for the preſent day,
And promiſes for future ones to pay.
Who was the neighbour here?——
Unanimous they cry, Who pity ſhow'd,
And whoſe ſoft boſom ſympathy o'erflow'd.
Then ſaid the LORD, Hence freely learn to pour,
Impartial bleſſings in affliction's hour.

IT chanc'd, as to a village he drew near,
The voice of ſupplication met his ear;
Ten lepers ſtand, and with intreaty, pray
To wipe their ſpots of infamy away.
The SAVIOUR bids them to the Prieſts repair,
And in their hands the legal off'rings bear.

They, with amazement, on their journey find,
Their health compleated, and their SAVIOUR kind:
Happy to be to ſuch a ſtate reſtor'd,
ONE haſtens back to bleſs his gracious LORD.
To whom the SAVIOUR, — gratitude is thine —
TEN were reſtor'd, — where lag the guilty NINE?
Fond man, in want, can ſupplication pour,
GOD's wiſdom celebrate, and pow'r adore;
Intreat with fervor, mercies to ſecure,
Health to reſtore, or ſafety to inſure;
The benefit obtain'd, man's thoughtleſs race
Forgets its tribute at the throne of grace;
The task of thanks ungratefully delays,
Eager to pray, but — much averſe to praiſe.
WHEN duty calls to lift thy ſoul in pray'r,
Do it with fervent zeal, but awful care;
Nor in vain phraſes, clamorous, and long,
Employ the awful function of thy tongue:
In ſtill retirement, on thy knees attend,
And thus on high thy ſupplications ſend:
FATHER of ALL! RULER Supreme in Heav'n!
All praiſe, all honor to thy Name be giv'n!
Let earth's extenſive round thy pow'r obey,
Thy goſpel rule with univerſal ſway;
Thy will, to ready approbation move
As well the ſouls on earth, as ſaints above:

This day, with needful food, ſupply our want,
And each ſucceeding day, the bleſſing grant:
Thy pardon to our treſpaſſes extend,
As we compaſſionate who us offend:
From dangerous temptation guard our way,
Nor evil's ſore affliction on us lay:
For thou art holy, and to Thee belong
The CHERUB's praiſes, and the SERAPH's ſong:
Power, glory, majeſty are thine alone,
And, from eternal ages, guard thy throne.

BUT if with decent, and religious care
Thou joineſt faſting as the wings to pray'r,
Faſt to thyſelf and GOD; nor ſtrive to ſhow
Affected marks of languor or of woe:
For ſuch do human approbation claim;
Nor faſt for wickedneſs, but thirſt for fame.
Or, if thy hands prepare to ſpread relief
Through pregnant ſcenes of miſery and grief,
In ſecret give; and thus ſincerely prove,
You mean GOD only ſhould reward your love:
For GOD to men and angels ſhall reveal,
What modeſt merit does on earth conceal;
The mind's intention gives the virtue's name;
Hence acts derive their ſcandal, or their fame.
Who thirſts for blood, but waits ſome happier time,
More ſafely to commit the plotted crime;

Already ſtabs—and calls upon his head
The curſe which follows, where man's blood is ſhed.
Who looks on innocence with luſtful eyes,
And each ſeductive artful method tries;
Though no pollution ſtain his ſecret hours,
He ſins in purpoſe, and, in will, deflow'rs:
Thus ſhall your heav'nly Father nicely weigh,
And bring each hidden thought to open day.
  But blind yourſelves, officiouſly ye try
To pluck the moat from out a brother's eye:
Ye fooliſh hypocrites! to this attend—
Yourſelves correct, then may ye others mend:
But rather love, than judge.——
To love the good, or gratefully repay
The pleaſing warmth of friendſhip's foſt'ring day,
This even reaſon bids; nay, barb'rous climes
Have ſtamp'd Ingratitude as firſt of crimes:
But ſtricter bonds of duty I enjoin,
A newer precept, and a love divine.
Bleſs, who with imprecations curſe your name,
Love, who with venom'd malice blaſt your fame;
Pray for their good, who ev'ry means employ
To hurt your perſon, and your peace deſtroy.
But,—how, ye ſay, if ſuch compaſſion tend,
In vain, the morals of our foe to mend?
How oft, or long, muſt we complacent prove,
And, for their hatred, give away our love?

Often,

Often, as foes repentant, ſue for grace,
With mercy's arms thoſe penitents embrace.
Copy your heav'nly Father's boundleſs plan,
Profuſe of bleſſings to the race of man:
His rain refreſhes, and his ſun-beams gild
As well the wicked as the good man's field:
As YE forgive, ſo ſhall your GOD diſplay
Forgiving mercy at the laſt great day.
For know, the day will come, when all, with fear,
Before GOD's juſt tribunal muſt appear,
To reap the recompence of acts below;
Thence ſoar to bliſs, or plunge in endleſs woe.
The trumpet's awful ſound ſhall raiſe the dead,
And dire amazement o'er creation ſpread;
The Son of Man ſhall come with pomp and pow'r,
To ſpeak the ſentence of that dreadful hour:
Millions of SPIRITS ſhall the Judge attend,
And, with their piercing ſhouts, heav'n's concave rend;
Thoſe, who have lov'd his precepts to obey,
Like flocks of ſheep ſhall on his right hand ſtay;
While ſouls, of ev'ry righteous gift bereft,
Like ſordid goats ſhall tremble at his left:
To thoſe, "Ye bleſſed of my Father, live;
"And taſte the pureſt joys that Heav'n can give:
"For I was hungry, and your tender care
"Did ſweet refreſhments for my wants prepare;

" My parching thirſt, with pleaſant draughts remov'd;
" And brought it willingly, for much ye lov'd:
" Ye ſaw me friendleſs, and a ſtranger, come,
" Ye bid me welcome, and ye took me home:
" My nakedneſs in robes of comfort clad,
" And on my bed of ſickneſs made me glad:
" In priſon, and in fetters bound, ye ſtrove
" To ſooth the ſorrow which ye could not move:
" For this your kindneſs to the POOR was ſhown;
" And ever have I made their cauſe, my own."
But to the goats, " Ye curſed ſpirits, ſay
" What acts of mercy did your lives diſplay?
" When did your hands ſupply the wiſh'd relief?
" Or did your ſouls reſponſive ſigh to grief?
" Did not the plaintive poor, unheeded lye?
" And, to excite compaſſion, vainly cry?"
Then ſhall theſe wretches to the flames deſcend,
To roar in torments which ſhall have no end!
While happy ſpirits ſhall aſcend, to prove
Encreaſing bliſs and never ceaſing love:
For think not 'tis enough to call me LORD,
And render no obedience to my word;
Obedience only ſhall the teſt endure,
And HEAVEN's bright wreaths of happineſs ſecure.
WHAT man, who aims a laſting houſe to raiſe,
But carefully each ſpot, and ſoil ſurveys?

To

To give a firm foundation to the baſe,
Contrives it on a ſolid rock to place;
Compleated, ſees it with a conſcious pride,
The war of jarring elements deride;
If rains deſcend, or boiſt'rous BOREAS blows,
A whirlwind rages, nay, a deluge flows;
Still does it firm theſe rude aſſaults endure;
The rock ſupports it, and the rock is ſure.
But not thus firmly will that building ſtand
Whoſe baſis reſts upon the fickle ſand:
When whiſtling winds, and cloud-born torrents meet,
Swell into ſtorm, and on its turrets beat,
It ſhakes—it nods—till with a dreadful ſound
It pours rebounding ruin on the ground.
Who hears my words, and ſtrict obedience pays,
His faith upon the rock of ages lays:
Though ſtorms of perſecution ſhould ariſe,
Temptation's blaſts, and ſorrow's floods ſurpriſe,
They cannot ſhake him, for his baſe is ſure;
And ſhall to all eternity endure.
Not ſo, whom negligence permits to ſtray
And, quit unthinking, virtue's ſafer way:
When perſecution frowns, or terror pours
Its fiery tempeſts, and enſanguin'd ſhowers,
He ſinks—unapt ſuch fury to withſtand;
For lo! he truſted to a baſe of ſand.

Thus

THUS taught the LORD, and as he moves along,
Encreaſing multitudes in torrents throng:
When lo—the ſons of grief, with ſolemn pace
Seek through their ranks their weeping way to trace;
Aloft they bear, who in his bloom had won
Fair virtue's race—a hopeful, only ſon:
The mother, led by ſorrow and deſpair,
Now beats her boſom, and now rends her hair;
Then checks her grief, and meekly prays to GOD,
To heal the ſcourges of affliction's rod:
THAT FRIEND, ſtill ready to relieve our want,
Deſigns (an unexpected aid) to grant:
Approaching near, CHRIST bid the bearers ſtay,
And to the mournful mother made his way.
" Weep not unhappy parent, ſaid the LORD,
" Thy ſon ſhall live, obedient to my word!"
Then to the youth, " Ariſe thou ſenſeleſs clay,
" Again to paſs life's tranſitory day,"
He ſaid---and ſtrait the youth with vigor ſprung,
And, wrapp'd in wonder, on his parent hung.
Th' aſtoniſh'd crowd exclaim, a GOD is here——
A GOD, whom DEATH obeys, and DEVILS fear.
This is indeed a prophet, kindly ſent
To teach, nay, almoſt force us, to repent.
THUS to reclaim the captive ſoul he ſtrove,
By marks of pow'r, or winning acts of love;

When

When thouſands liſten'd in the deſart's wild,
The hungry parent, and the fretful child,
He bid five ſcanty loaves ſubſiſtence yield;
They took, they eat, they wonder'd, and were fill'd:
The diſtant regions caught the mighty fame,
And thouſands learnt to bleſs the SAVIOUR's name.

As calmly ſleeping in a ſhip he laid,
A gath'ring ſtorm burſt furious o'er his head;
Tempeſtuous winds conſpir'd with foaming tides,
And angry billows laſh'd the veſſel's ſides:
The tir'd diſciples to their LORD repair,
Rouſe him to help, and hear their earneſt pray'r.
Their want of confidence he gently blames,
And ſtrait the elemental fury tames
With "BE AT PEACE,"—he ſpoke, and all was ſtill;—
Winds huſh'd; waves placid; at their Maſter's will.
Amaz'd, each trembles at that awful pow'r,
Which reſcues thus from danger's threat'ning hour;
Confeſs divine that univerſal ſway,
Which lawleſs winds, and madd'ning waves obey.

WHERE, at BETHESDA's pool, crowds flock to know
The healing powers that from its waters flow,
A cripple lay ſupine: misfortune's cries
Few deign to hear, and many dare deſpiſe:
To whom the SAVIOUR, "Doſt thou wiſh to gain
"A reſpite from the galling bands of pain?"

I wiſh in vain, the wretched man replies,
None will aſſiſt, nor can I helpleſs, riſe;
Thus, e'er my limbs have crawl'd their tardy way,
The ſhades of night o'ertake the parting day.
When JESUS,—" Henceforth, be thy members ſound,
" Nor longer preſs th' inhoſpitable ground;
" Take up thy bed, and on thy ſhoulders bear
" The fruit of ſteady faith, and modeſt pray'r."
But when the Phariſaic tribe perceiv'd
A cripple, on the ſabbath-day, reliev'd;
Outrageous indignation fir'd their ſoul,
To blaſt CHRIST's actions, and his pow'r controul:
Who though through headſtrong, ſenſeleſs zeal revil'd,
Yet kindly taught what actions man defil'd.
" To reſt upon the ſabbath's ſacred day,
" That GOD himſelf commands, ye rightly ſay;
" But 'tis a reſt from ſin, and ſervile pains,
" From folly's riot, and pollution's ſtains;
" To give our ſouls to GOD, and grateful raiſe
" The welcome incenſe of uplifted praiſe.
" Yet at ſuch times, if helpleſs cattle ſtray,
" Or fall to danger, and diſtreſs, a prey;
" What PHARISEE but would aſſiſtance lend,
" Nor fear a ſacred precept to offend?
" How much the rather, when a brother ſtands
" And asks aſſiſtance at a brother's hands?

" O

" O SCRIBES and PHARISEES, ye love to wear
" A mask of piety and rigid care;
" In oſtentation's trappings to deceive,
" Studious of how ye look, not how ye live.
" Like hollow ſepulchres, whoſe outward face
" The glowing tints of art, or ſculptures grace;
" But hide within, corruption's mould'ring bones,
" The ſighs of orphans, and the widow's groans.
" 'Tis not enough to cleanſe with niceſt art
" The cup, or hands, or body; cleanſe the heart:
" In guilt alone pollution's ſtain is ſeen,
" The hand's unſpotted, when the heart is clean;
" 'Tis not enough to pay the legal ſhare,
" Of what your flocks produce, or gardens bear;
" If JUSTICE be a ſtranger to your door,
" And MERCY ſmile not on the proſtrate poor;
" In vain ten thouſand hecatombs ariſe,
" And curl their mounting fragrance to the skies;
" In vain each oily torrent pours along,
" And rapt'rous melody exalts the ſong;
" In vain loud, long, and zealous pray'rs aſcend,
" If no ſincerity of heart attend;
" Unmeaning actions GOD will ne'er approve,
" Nor give to hypocrites the praiſe of love.
A youth enquires, " What means ſhall I employ
" To gain poſſeſſion of eternal joy?"

The LORD commands his MAKER to adore,
And grateful praiſes to his GOD to pour;
That next, to fellow-man his love extend,
And (as his own) to be creation's friend.
The youth aſſerts, theſe precepts are obey'd,
Nor has he from theſe duties ever ſtray'd.
" One thing, O youth, the bleſſed LORD replies,
" (And with that one, his half-form'd virtue tries;)
" One thing remains, diſperſe thy ample ſtore,
" And call the needy to thy friendly door."
Too late he wiſh'd the bitter truth untold,
He lik'd his MAKER, but ador'd his gold.

THEN JESUS to the multitude,—" Beware
" When dazzling riches ſpread their ſubtle ſnare;
" Where affluence ſmiles, and wealth profuſely flows,
" How few attain religion's calm repoſe?
" As ſoon may cables paſs the needle's eye,
" As thoſe aſcend to realms of bliſs on high;
" Who (wretched ſouls) have made a God of ore,
" Who (but for plenty) never had been poor.
" Seek not on earth to heap unbounded wealth,
" Which thieves by force may take, or fraud by ſtealth;
" But lay up treaſures in the realms of joy,
" Which ruſt corrupts not, nor can thieves deſtroy.
" Yet why ſo eager, wretched man, to gain
" Superfluous wealth at ſuch expence of pain?

" What profit, if thy arbitrary ſway
" The ſons of all creation did obey;
" If in exchange, thy forfeit ſoul became
" A prey to vengeance, and devouring flame?
" Or why diſtruſt GOD's providential care,
" Which compaſſes the earth, and ſea, and air?
" Behold the vegetable race, or view
" The maiden lily in her ſilver hue;
" Unapt to ſpin, and uninform'd to toil,
" She finds ſubſiſtence in her deſtin'd ſoil:
" Yet SOLOMON in regal pomp array'd,
" A fainter glow of ornament diſplay'd.
" Be only conſtant in the voice of pray'r,
" Nor doubt, however mean, GOD's conſtant care;
" The ſmalleſt bird that wings its rapid way,
" Through yielding air, and wide expanſe of day,
" Flies but as GOD permits; who gives to raiſe
" And ſtretch its throat, to chant its MAKER's praiſe.
" Then ſeek not, with an anxious care, to know
" What good or ill the morrow will beſtow;
" Where, for thy hunger, thou ſhalt find ſupplies,
" Or what ſhall guard thee from inclement skies;
" Approve thy actions to the GOD above,
" And find him GOD of mercy, GOD of love.
" Ye fear the pow'r of man, whoſe little ſway,
" Extends no farther than life's fleeting day;

" Whoſe

" Whoſe utmoſt empire o'er the body reigns,
" And who inflicts, if ſharp, yet ceaſing pains:
" O rather fear that dreadful God, who pours
" His fiery wrath in everlaſting ſhow'rs;
" Who caſts the never-dying ſoul to hell,
" That proudly dares againſt his will rebel.
" Nor think, ye kind companions of my care,
" In ſmiling eaſe, or worldly pomp to ſhare;
" Far other treatment muſt your lives attend,
" Denied that balm of human life, a friend:
" Oppreſſion, torture muſt their labours crown,
" Who preach my doctrine, and the world diſown.
" Nay, time ſhall come, when ſanctity ſhall plead;
" God's cauſe demands that Innocence ſhould bleed.
" But I your Shepherd, with unwearied care,
" My tender ſheep for happineſs prepare:
" I die to ſave them, and they know my voice,
" And happy, in the well-known ſound, rejoice;
" But other's invitations will not hear,
" They know their Shepherd, but a ſtranger fear:
" And yet what greater bleſſings could I give,
" To tempt all ſtraying flocks to hear and live?
" But theſe, O bleſſed Father, are my ſhare,
" For theſe I pray'd, and thou haſt heard my pray'r:
" O guard them from temptation's ſnares below,
" And crowns of never-fading bliſs beſtow."

Dis-

DISCOURSING thus, near BETHANY they ſtray'd,
Where LAZARUS in death's embrace was laid.
Whom Jeſus greatly lov'd—
Mov'd with the anguiſh of his heart-ſtruck friends,
He ſadly to the weeping village tends.
He lifts his eyes, big ſorrow ſwell'd his breaſt;
Till Pity burſt in tears—
Yes JESUS wept—the gentle PRINCE of LOVE
Vouchſafes man's tender paſſions to approve;
Allows in grief to lift the ſtreaming eye,
And heave the boſom with the heart-felt ſigh:
Then from the grave, while crowds with wonder gaze,
He haſtes the happy LAZARUS to raiſe.
He bids, *Come forth*,—and with an awful dread
The gloomy cavern yields her ghaſtly dead.
Attending JEWS convinc'd, their homage pay,
Believe with wonder and with faith obey;
Save who replete with malice haſte to ſpread
A ſwift deſtruction o'er the SAVIOUR's head.

FOR now approach'd the black, tremendous hour
When JEWISH rage conſpir'd with ROMAN power,
To act a deed, (the genuine deed of HELL)
Which ſcarce can thought conceive, and nature ſhrinks to tell;
To kill, who to relieve each ſorrow ſtrove,
Whoſe life was mercy, and whoſe breath was love.
Ye ſons of darkneſs, where was conſcience fled?
Where ſtray'd your pity? or was juſtice dead?

Accurſed

Accurſed SALEM, theatre of blood,
The grave of every prophet great and good!
Accurſed theatre of ſenſeleſs rage;
Which goodneſs moves not, nor can love aſſwage
But JESUS, born to ſave rebellious man
Purſues unmov'd redemption's wondrous plan;
Prepar'd to ſlaughter, as a lamb to go,
To drink the cup, and ſuck the dregs of woe.
Yet ſome concern his gentle boſom mov'd
To leave thoſe dear diſciples whom he lov'd,
Like ſheep without the ſhepherd's care to ſtray,
And face the heat of fury's ſcorching day;
To dare the point of zeal's ungovern'd rage
And act the martyr on life's cruel ſtage.
But thus the wiſdom of God's councils ſtood;
And even mercy triumph'd but in blood.

AND now the day approach'd, when crowds prepare
The Paſchal Feaſt in SOLYMA to ſhare:
The SAVIOUR with his choſen train attends
To bleſs (while yet they may be call'd) his friends.
Each rite obſerv'd which MOSES' law ordain'd,
A new command the SAVIOUR then explain'd:
He broke the bread, and bleſſing, bid to take;
" This is my body broken for your ſake:
" Eat it in token of my dying love,
" And thus each comfort of my paſſion prove.

" This

" This cup, my blood for ſin's remiſſion ſhed,
" Drink it in mem'ry of your Maſter, dead;
" Thus ſhall ye do till time ſhall be no more,
" Thus ſhare my bleſſings, and my name adore."
And now the pow'rs of darkneſs are at hand,
Now reſtleſs malice arms her bloody band;
Soon muſt I taſte the bitter cup of death,
Soon to redeem offenders, yield my breath;
Betray'd by one who ever ſhar'd my love,
For whom my pity, and my mercy ſtrove;
But Satan wins him to the fatal deed,
And thus the SAVIOUR by his friend muſt bleed.
The traitor heard, and ſelf-convicted fled,
The darkeſt paths of deepeſt guilt to tread.
Now black-brow'd ſorrow with her penſive train,
Commenc'd her gloomy, unexampl'd reign;
Deſponding thoughts invade each tortur'd breaſt,
Once ſo compleatly happy, once ſo bleſt!
Silent, each muſes on CHRIST's myſtic ſpeech,
Too dark, too dreadful for conception's reach.
At length the SAVIOUR, — " 'Tis indeed the hour
" When darts, in malice dip'd, muſt fly with pow'r;
" Fly and prevail, till crucifixion rends
" The dying SAVIOUR from his ſcatter'd friends:
" But ſoon I mount bright manſions to prepare,
" That each diſciple may my glory ſhare.

" Should then the tempeſt of affliction roar,
" And perſecution all her horrors pour;
" Should vice and malice, league with ſpiteful joy,
" Your peace to raviſh, or your lives deſtroy,
" Yet ſtill have HOPE,—the COMFORTER ſhall come,
" And lead you victors to your deſtin'd home:
" His SPIRIT ſhall your doubtful footſteps guide,
" And bear you ſtedfaſt through temptation's tide.
" Then let no ſharp deſpair your boſoms rend,
" GOD is your Father, and the SON your friend:
" But yet ſo dreadful muſt the trial prove,
" That each diſciple ſhall forget to love;
" Each ſhall this night deſert his ſuffering LORD,
" Deny his faith, and diſobey his word."
What, O my GOD, the zealous PETER cried,
By US, by ME, my SAVIOUR be denied?—
Sooner ſhall death, with agonizing pain,
Each fibre torture, open ev'ry vein.
" Miſtaken PETER!—ſcarce ſhall morning dawn
" Lend its faint luſtre to the ſpangl'd lawn,
" E'er thou ſhalt fail me, and in fear, pretend
" Your LORD a ſtranger, and your GOD no friend:
" But ſtill my prayers are for your ſouls preferr'd,
" And little flock, my earneſt pray'rs are heard."
As when the night, with horrible array,
In darkneſs wraps the life-reviving day;

The

The cautious traveller uncertain treads,
And miſchiefs, copious as his fancy, dreads;
If now ſome lucky chance preſent to ſight
The glimm'ring luſtre (though of diſtant light,)
Bright hope revives his ſoul. ——
So the reviv'd diſciples, from afar
Rejoic'd in hope at comfort's promis'd Star.
THEN riſing, ſilent each prepares to go
Where CEDRON's brook flows muſically ſlow;
They ſeek a garden's ſtill ſequeſter'd ſhade,
By night's dark empire more ſecluſive made.
All enter; when CHRIST bids that three attend
The dreadful conflict of their ſuff'ring Friend;
The ſons of ZEBEDEE, with PETER ſhare
That awful task to ſooth the SAVIOUR's care:
For crowding horrors now amaze his ſoul,
As loud, and near, deſpair's black billows rowl;
He bids the three retire; then calls, to ſtay,
To watch, and with their utmoſt fervor pray:
'Till agitations, more than thought can reach,
Than language paint, or tongue of angels teach,
O'erpower his mind; all trembling he adores,
And thus his anguiſh to his Father pours:
" O FATHER! let this bitter cup remove,
" And make me happy with thy former love:
" Yet, if thy heav'nly will has ſo decreed,
" And thou ordain'ſt thy victim Son to bleed,

" Thy will be done,—he ſaid, and drops like blood,
" Profuſe, and large, o'er all his body ſtood."
Scarce could his breaſt his ſtruggling heart confine,
So great the terrors of the wrath divine:
Convulſive pangs each wretched fibre ſtrain,
And inward horror gives an edge to pain;
Adopted nature would at length have fail'd,
And all the tempter's ſubtle arts prevail'd,
But GOD an angel ſent.——
He wings his flight from realms of endleſs day,
Yet ſtopt, to ſee the SAVIOUR proſtrate lay;
Stopt, and had almoſt wept:——
Then hovers gently, and with awful dread,
Bids the world's SAVIOUR raiſe his drooping head;
Tells how Redemption's act the CHERUBS ſing,
And SERAPHS chant HOSANNAH's to their King:
That SATAN's pow'r muſt to his triumphs yield,
And vanquiſh'd Death fly ſtingleſs from the field;
'Till men on earth accord with ſaints above,
To ſpeak him KING of Glory, GOD of Love.
Thus rouz'd, the proſpect of his paſſion, paints
His glorious martyrs, and triumphant ſaints;
Unnumber'd ſouls, a bright extatic crowd,
The precious purchaſe of Redemption's blood:
The bleſſed proſpect fires his raptur'd breaſt,
And, in his features, mercy ſhone expreſt.

He haſtens to his friends, where Satan ſhed
Sleep's drowſy poppies on each pendant head;
To whom (while yet intranc'd in ſloth they lay)
" And is it thus my friends, ye watch and pray?
" But what avails? the tempter muſt ſucceed;
" The ſheep muſt wander, and the Shepherd bleed:
" But ſtill ariſe, ſee where a hoſtile band,
" Led by deceitful JUDAS is at hand."
He ſaid, and torches ſhot a lurid glare;
And ſenſeleſs uproar rouz'd the ſilent air;
When lo! in front th' apoſtate Judas ſtood
Prepar'd for treachery, prepar'd for blood;
Yet dares to meet the Man devoid of guile,
And gild his helliſh purpoſe with a ſmile:
Dares on thoſe lips, which never ſpake amiſs,
To print the venom of a traitor's kiſs;
With fulſome, feign'd reſpect, to hail him LORD,
And thus for open miſchief give the word.
But vainly, weak deſcriptive numbers flow,
The calm compoſure of the GOD to ſhow;
In vain muſt fancy's pencil aim to trace
The mild forgiveneſs of the SAVIOUR's face;
Conceive it, all whom trifles overcome,
And fully piety with paſſion's gloom:
Conceive it (if ye can) ye ſons of fame,
Whom modiſh inſults kindle into flame;

Who,

Who, hurried by the tide of honor's flood,
Dare waſh off infamy with brother's blood;
O learn like him to act, like him to live;
O learn that god-like leſſon, to FORGIVE:
One only ſoft rebuke the SAVIOUR gave,
And, in rebuking, meant that Soul to ſave.
Then to the crowd thus mildly deigns to ſpeak—
My name is JESUS; is it me ye ſeek?
That ſacred name no ſooner reach'd their ear
Than proſtrate fell the band——
O tyrant conſcience! thy deſpotic ſway
The ſtouteſt rebels to their God obey,
Amply confeſs before thy awful throne,
Shrink at thy touch, and with thy terrors groan!
Again, (if me ye ſeek) the SAVIOUR ſaid,
Bid me alone the paths of ſorrow tread;
Be my diſciples free——
Him, while he ſpake, his enemies ſurround,
And MAN's REDEEMER is in fetters bound.
Too hard a fight for Peter's zeal to bear;
He drew his ſword, and lopt a ſervant's ear:
But CHRIST reprov'd his too abundant rage,
And bid the tumult of his breaſt aſſwage:
Tells how his Father's legions are at hand,
Eager to execute ſome dread command:
But that ſuch reſcue would defeat the ends
To which his labour and his PASSION tends;

Then,

Then, by permiſſion heals the wounded ear,
And follows as they lead ——.
But, O my SAVIOUR, what attempt can reach,
What power on earth, what eloquence can teach
The painful road thy injur'd mercy trod;
Or paint the tortures of the SON of God?
With PETER, diſtant, trembling I ſurvey,
The fatal triumphs of that bloody day;
Yet ſee a ſight my guilty Soul to rend;
For Oh! my ſins tranſfix'd that dying friend.
PATIENT and gentle as a lamb he ſtands,
Nor anſwers to the Pontiff's rough demands:
Truth's ſacred myſt'ries are alone beſtow'd
On thoſe who ſeek and labour to be good;
Vice will againſt Heaven's kindeſt arts combine,
As coſtly pearls in vain are offer'd ſwine.
Nor leſs was PILATE ſtruck with awful dread;
He greatly fear'd ſuch blameleſs blood to ſhed:
But headſtrong malice, and unbridl'd rage,
Nor flowing numbers ſooth, nor reaſon can aſſwage.
To men who thirſt with fury for his blood,
JESUS ſeems guilty and BARABBAS, good.
As when the produce of deſcending rains
Rolls from the mountains, and o'erflows the plains:
When rapid ſtreams their haſty force combine,
And floods with floods unmercifully join;

At length a deluge pours — th' affrighted ground
Yields to its force, nor ſtays to mark its bound.
It breaks away; triumphantly it pours,
Burſts o'er the land, and as it ruins, roars.
So fierce, ſo headſtrong rag'd the JEWISH crowd,
Than floods, more forcing, and than torrents, loud.
They ask with clamor that the croſs ſhould bear
The man of mercy, though affliction's heir.
Uncertain and amaz'd the Roman ſtood;
He ſaw no guilt, and wiſh'd to ſhed no blood;
But overcome with riot's reſtleſs roar,
Reluctantly he yields ———
So, when the leafy honors of the wood,
Which long the fierceſt blaſts of BOREAS ſtood,
Have left their firm ſupport; th' intruding air
Officious ſeeks them on its wings to bear;
And now they riſe, now fall in flutt'ring play,
Irreſolute to fly, and yet unapt to ſtay;
Till fiercer blaſts o'erpower the yielding train,
Sweep it through air, and ſcatter o'er the plain.
AND now curſt ſpirits quit their dark abode,
To heap diſtreſſes on the SON of GOD;
For DEVILS only could ſufficient prove
To torture mercy, and to murder love:
Inventive fiends ſucceſsful arts inſpir'd,
'Till Hell itſelf, and even Jews were tir'd.

Now

Now, now they drag and nail him to the wood,
Who bathes my ſorrows with his healing blood:
They nail him to the croſs — O view him there,
His bleſſed limbs they ſtretch, his bleſſed limbs they tear;
They pierce thoſe hands, which yet deſire to ſpread,
And bring down bleſſings on each ſinner's head;
They fix thoſe feet, which yet would move, to ſhow
Unwearied mercy to their greateſt foe.
But nor malicious JEWS nor Pilate's pow'r,
Nor all the fury of that hell-born hour,
Had kill'd the LORD of LIFE, if wretched man
Had never wander'd from his Maker's plan;
But devious thus, yet mercy is reveal'd,
And by his ſtripes our wounded ſouls are heal'd.

ONE part, barbarians yet unhurt remains,
To ſpeak his anguiſh, and expreſs his pains;
Which yet — O bid each mountain lend its gloom,
Or in earth's yawning caverns ſeek for room;
E'er yet ye hear that unexampl'd pray'r,
"O FATHER, pardon; bleſſed FATHER, ſpare,
"Spare theſe inhuman ſhedders of my blood,
"Be mine, through torture, to procure them good."
At length all nature felt, and darkneſs ſpread
Her blackeſt veil to ſhade his ſacred head;
Rocks rent, earth ſhook, confuſion pour'd abroad,
And all creation ſpoke th' expiring GOD:

While thus aloud, "My GOD, where art thou fled,
"Thy SON forſook?"—he ſaid, and bow'd his head,
And yielded up the ghoſt.—

As when ſome flow'r, o'ercharg'd with ev'ning dew,
Shuts for a while its glories from our view,
Again to bloom, and brighter tints to ſhow
Then deck the dawn of day, or IRIS' bow;
So lovely hung the bleſſed SAVIOUR's head,
While death's dark night her woe-dipp'd mantle ſpread;
'Till reſurrection's morn reſtor'd the day,
And, through the grave's dark horrors, burſt its way;
Then roſe the LORD of LIFE, while ANGELS wove
Bright amaranthine wreaths of grateful love,
To grace the Victor's brow.—
The glad diſciples, in a tranſport gaze,
And wrapp'd in wonder, ſcarce have pow'r to praiſe;
Inſtructed, ſee Heav'ns wide-extended plan,
And how important are the hopes of man!
The LORD commands them to proclaim abroad
The glorious freedom of the ſons of GOD;
And, through the univerſe, with ceaſeleſs care,
The healing comforts of his word to bear;
Tells that GOD's Spirit ſhall their boſom fire,
And ſacred truth and holy zeal inſpire;
Then bleſſes theſe his friends.—
And ends with "PEACE I leave," that peace which flows
At GOD's right hand, and only virtue knows.

Thus

Thus breathing peace, the SAVIOUR roſe and ſoar'd;
The bleſs'd diſciples awfully ador'd,
'Till clouds impede their view, — but angels tell,
That He who conquer'd Death, and fetter'd Hell,
In bright array ſhall once again deſcend,
And to creation's beauties put an end;
Shall come in glory, who on earth diſplay'd
Virtue eclips'd by ſorrow's deepeſt ſhade;
Within his loving arms his flock ſhall hold,
And gather careful to his Father's fold;
They ſaid, and vaniſh'd. — The diſciples heard,
And weigh'd attentive each important word:
Then joyful to the holy city move,
" There live in unity and godly love;"
'Till ample pow'rs they from on high obtain,
To found the goſpel's placid, peaceful reign,
And ſpread diffuſive through the world's domain.

F I N I S.

Thus breathing peace, the Saviour rose and fourd
The blest disciples meekly adoring round.
"All clouds impede their view," — the angels cry,
"But He who's crowned Death, and throned HIM,
In bright array shall once again descend,
And to creation's bounds put an end;
Bright come in glory, while on earth dethroned
Virtue eclipsed by fraud's deep shade;
While his loving arms his flock enfold,
And Pardon cancel to his Father's fold:
They hail, and vanish." — The disciples heard
And weighed each word with unspoken thought:
Then joyful to the holy city sped,
"There live in unity and godly love,
All ample pow'rs they from on high obtain,
To found the gospel's placid, peaceful reign,
And spread diffusive through the world's domain."

FINIS.